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THE NEW ERA OF FRUITFULNESS IN ETHICAL THINKING.

C. E. AYRES.

I.

IF THE content of the science of ethics is assumed to be determined by the treatises of ethicists, then the history of ethics is the history of a dualism. For practically all the work which has been done in ethics up to the present time has been done simultaneously in two fields and upon two problems. From the very first ethics has attempted on the one hand to give a causal explanation of moral phenomena, and on the other hand to propound a theory of what things are good, and what acts right.

Doubtless these two problems are indistinguishable from one another in the minds of many students of ethics. But the difficulty of distinguishing between them does not lie in an external identity. So far as their external aspects are concerned, the analysis of the moral consciousness, the examination of the moral judgment, the determination of the nature of conscience and of duty—these problems, or rather, this problem is clearly enough a different thing from the formulation of rules of conduct and the definition of a moral ideal. Formally speaking, the analysis of the moral judgment is a description of what is, while the formulation of the goal of right living is a description of what ought to be.

The reason for the assumed indistinguishability of these two problems lies beneath the surface differences in the relation which has always been supposed to exist between their answers. The fundamental postulate of ethical thinking from earliest times to the twentieth century has been the proposition that the only source of moral guidance and moral progress is the study of the phenomena of the moral judgment. The major undeclared assumption of practically all ethicists up to modern times has been the belief

that the answer to the question: "What ought I to do?" is to be found only in a theological, or metaphysical, or psychological analysis of the process to which the word "ought" refers.

As a result, however, of the gradual realization, to which ethics came at the end of the last century, of the cosmic extent and complexity of the moral problem, a grave crisis has overtaken the science. We are to-day in the process of bringing the tacit assumption of the dependence of moral doctrine upon metaphysico-psychological speculation into the light of ruthless criticism.

The magnitude of the issues of this crisis can be appreciated properly only in a historical study of ethical methodology; but such a study can only be indicated in this paper, since, if it were not limited to a mere sketch of a single period, its proportions and importance would entirely subordinate the purpose for which this interpretation of the recent history of ethics has been made. For that purpose is determined by the future rather than by the past methodology of ethics. If our suspicions of the practical efficacy of the analysis of moral consciousness should appear to be well founded, and if, during the next decade they should be heightened and justified, then that field will have to be definitely abandoned by students of morals. The attempt to reduce the life of the individual and of society to some sort of moral order,—to make life more worth living,—will begin not with a brief for the rationality of conscience or for the instinctiveness of moral reactions, but rather with a survey of the conditions of social life. To put more meaning into human existence,—to make of it a more orderly and less futile thing than it has ever been,—we shall try first to understand the meaning of the life we are now leading.

II.

The three great ethical treatises of the later nineteenth century contained little augury of the approaching crisis in ethical theory. But in so far as they carried the tra-

ditional types of ethical speculation to a higher degree of refinement than had ever been reached before, they constituted one of the important causes of the revulsion against the traditional ethics. The very barrenness of work so monumental in scope as that of Sidgwick, Green, and Martineau contributed largely to the formulation of a new ethical methodology.

Sidgwick recognizes the dual nature of ethical inquiry at the very outset of his book. "I prefer to consider Ethics as the science or study of what ought to be," he says. This is a clear statement of the problem of human welfare; if this is true, it is the business of ethics to construct a system of moral precepts which shall define the good and the right. One cannot restrain a smile on finding that the sentence following the one quoted above is the author's apology for the fact that ethics—and his book—"consist, to a great extent, of a psychological discussion as to the 'nature of the moral faculty.'"

The answer to this paradox seems to lie in Sidgwick's belief that since right conduct must consist in rigid adherence to the principles of the one true theory of morality, the discovery of which of the current "methods of ethics" is the "true" one must necessarily contribute greatly to the establishment of the precepts of moral action. The criterion of the validity of the "methods of ethics" is to be the pragmatic test of the applicability of each theory to actual practice. Thus the method of the whole book coincides with the author's belief in the efficacy of moral philosophy. Sidgwick is able to show pretty conclusive evidence that the incommensurability of pleasures is an insuperable obstacle to the application of hedonistic theories to moral practice, and that the hopeless deficiency in clearness and precision, in self-evidence, in mutual consistency, and in universality of acceptance, of "intuitive" principles of morality makes the acceptance of intuitionism impossible.

When he came to the consideration of utilitarianism, however, Sidgwick unfortunately relented and refrained

from applying his pragmatic test with unmoved scepticism. Consequently he allowed himself to be convinced that in utilitarianism, reinforced by an intuitional principle of rational benevolence, he had found the really fruitful ethical doctrine. And still Sidgwick recognized in the end the impossibility of constructing a complete system of morality, even upon the utilitarian plan. Consequences must be considered, he says. But what sort of consequences? And how should the consequences be calculated—since pleasures are incommensurable? There is no answer to these questions—nothing but the bare conviction that the thing can be done. “No doubt a thoughtful and well-instructed Utilitarian may see dimly a certain way ahead.”

And so the study of “Methods of Ethics” ends as it began with the unsupported assumption that in some inexplicable way the guidance of human conduct toward the good and the right has been advanced by the decision that the moral consciousness of man works thus, and not so. The task is begun by virtue of an alleged “general agreement” that conduct is determined by principles in terms of which moral behavior is explained, and it is finished with “no doubt” that a man well-instructed in the “rational benevolence” variant of utilitarianism may somehow make some progress.

When the introduction to Green’s “Prolegomena to Ethics” is examined for vestiges of the assumption of the fruitfulness of a dual methodology in ethics, its similarity to the first chapter of “Methods of Ethics” is very striking. Green, like Sidgwick, explicitly recognizes the dual task which has been traditionally assigned to ethics. “It has generally been expected of a moralist that he should explain not only how men do act (*i.e.*, in making moral judgments) but how they should act.” But moral philosophy has fallen into disrepute because it has had “no interest for the imagination and no power over the heart.” It has become a natural science, seeking to explain causally the facts of moral life. But in so far as ethical speculation

has been reduced to a natural science, the "practical or preceptive" part of ethics has become obsolete.¹ Thus the utilitarian, "instead of telling men of a greatest sum of pleasures which they ought to seek, and which by acting in the light of a true insight they may attain . . . will rather set himself to show how the phraseology of 'ought' and 'ought not,' the belief in a good attainable by all, the consciousness of something that should be though it is not, may according to his philosophy be accounted for." Yet with such a clear insight into the futility of one analysis of moral consciousness, Green announces his intention of embarking upon the same voyage, though in a different ship. The "Prolegomena" is to be a metaphysical analysis of the fundamental nature of the cosmos, for the purpose of determining whether there is in man's being a principle which "consists in the consciousness of a moral ideal and the determination of human action thereby."

As a matter of fact, however, the metaphysician in Green completely overtops the moralist. For he not only gives over the bulk of his book to establishing the existence of "the consciousness of a moral ideal," but when in the fourth book he brings himself down to the specifically ethical job of showing how "human action is determined thereby" his habit is too strong upon him, and his achievement turns out to be a further elaboration of his metaphysic of morals rather than the justification of that speculation by the deduction from it of precepts for right conduct. "It remains to be asked," he says at the end of the book, "By what rule effort is to be guided, which we suppose the idea of a possible human perfection thus to initiate." Unless this problem can be solved "it would seem that our theory of the basis of morality, though its adoption might save some speculative persons from that distrust of their own conscience to which Hedonism would naturally lead them, can be of no further practical value."

¹ Green saw clearly enough that to resolve this methodological paradox by abandoning "practical ethics" is essentially to abandon ethics for sociology. See p. 382 of this article.

And in the end Green gave the game away, saving himself as best he could by the reiteration of his still unjustified assumption in the form of the assertion that "we all recognize virtues which carry in themselves unfulfilled possibilities," and by the distinction, which served him in tight places several times, between motives and effects. "No theory whatever of the 'Summum Bonum,' Hedonistic or other, can avail for the settlement of (the question of what law or usage or cause of action contributes to the better-being of society), which requires analysis of facts and circumstances, not consideration of ends. But it (a theory such as this) will sufficiently direct us in regard to the kind of effects we should look for in our analysis, and so to the value we should put upon them when ascertained." How this is to be done forms no part of the theory; yet that it occurs is the justification of the whole philosophy. Thus the "Prolegomena," like the "Methods of Ethics," ends as it began with the basic assertion that moral philosophy is the source of moral wisdom still unsubstantiated by any evidence beyond that of traditional acquiescence in convenient dogma.

It would seem as though a thinker like Martineau who believed morality to consist in "a feeling that *this* is worthier than *that*," and that the exercise of this feeling "demands no reflective introspection, no ability to lay the finger on what it is in the action which excites the feeling, or even to ask the question whether it be the motive or the effect," would naturally feel little necessity for providing the world with a book on ethics, except as a piece of scientific description. One does not have to listen long to the tone of the book, however, to realize that Martineau also labored under the universal ethical misapprehension that from his exposition of the facts of the moral choice he could deduce some positive contribution to morality. Martineau did indeed actually set about the task of stabilizing the work of conscience by providing it with a set of principles (through a hundred and thirty-six pages) with reference to which the rightness and wrongness of an act may

surely be determined—after first chiding Sidgwick, Spencer and Stephen for not having had the mental stamina to precede him in this necessary work.

Martineau's achievement, however, is hardly enough to justify the conclusion that from a theory of the nature of morality, a morality may be inferred. Waiving all consideration of the compatibility of the authority of Martineau's conscience and Martineau's principles, a glance at the nature of the principles themselves is sufficient to show that they are as far as the principle of self-realization from the needs of any actual moral situation. Martineau did not realize this, as Green and Sidgwick did of their generalizations. He produces situation after situation, solving each one in imagination without the least difficulty. His conception of a moral problem, however, does more credit to his character than to his mind; there is very little reality either in the difficulties or in their solution, to the modern way of thinking.

III.

In spite of the inadequacy of the types of ethical theory which have just been criticized, the fair historian cannot pass lightly over the positive contributions of Sidgwick, Green, and Martineau. It can hardly be expected that any philosopher will solve all the problems of the cosmos, though his failure to do so must be painstakingly noted in the interest of future progress. Moreover, the unexamined postulate which has been shown to underlie this ethical work was inherited from many generations of scholars, and perhaps it was not to be expected that it would be noted and its fallacy exposed in a period such as the Victorian; for while Darwin's work was already having large effects in all fields of thought in the seventies and eighties, still the evolutionary attitude had not become habitual in the sense in which it is now. Furthermore, though the great social reconstructions which are now going on were implicitly present at that time, the traditional "common sense" morality of the race was very much less in question

then than now. These two changes—the recognition of the wide variations through various evolutionary epochs of the social background of morality, and the demands made by modern industrial society for a reconstruction of conventional morality—are largely responsible for the growing recognition of the inadequacy of the older type of ethical theory.

That moral conduct is social conduct is no new idea. It is specifically enunciated by Aristotle, who defines ethics as a “study of man in his relations to Society.” In a certain sense Aristotle may be said to have been in possession of an idea of which Baldwin’s principle that “all rules of action for the guidance of life must be of possible social application, even though in their origin they are announced and urged by individuals” is simply one expression. The significant thing, however, is not that Baldwin thus restated the Kantian categorical imperative in the language of sociology, but rather that the importance of recognizing the social nature of moral problems was very much emphasized in the nineties, notably in the six hundred pages of Baldwin’s “Interpretations.”

Furthermore it is one thing to acknowledge the existence of society as the home of the individual; it is quite another thing to maintain as Sumner was doing² that society constructs the individual. The serious exposition of the theory that “right” means only “compatible with the existing order of things,” and that “philosophy and ethics are the products of the folkways” really represented a new attitude towards the development of society if not a wholly new conception.

The new recognition of the facts of social life, particularly of the significance of the wide discrepancies between the moral conduct of different peoples in different periods of social evolution, was perhaps a less potent awakener of ethicists from their dogmatic slumber than the growth of

²For though “Folkways” was not published until 1907, Sumner was teaching the doctrines which it contained very much earlier. See “Folkways,” Preface.

the modern urban-industrial society. Professor Tufts considers this the chief cause of the reconstruction of ethical concepts. "If we ask what has affected most intensely the ethical thought of the period we must find an answer, not in science, but in the economic, political, and family life. The changing conditions of business and industry, the shift to urban life, the consequent changes in the family, the demands for new legislation, the controversies over judicial interpretations, the search for more effective dealing with poverty, vice and crime, last of all the issues of nationalism and internationalism, war and peace—these and others of like sort have stirred men from easy reflection."

IV.

In the face of problems such as these it would seem that the old subconscious dogma of ethics,—the supposition that what men need is a clearer exposition of moral phenomena,—must atrophy from very disuse. As a matter of fact, however, while certain men resolved the premise of the older ethics by advocating the abandonment of metaphysico-psychological speculation for the more fruitful study of actual affairs, others seized the opposite horn of the dilemma, and proceeded to make ethics a "natural science." The form which this "natural" ethics typically took was that of an attempt to account for the phenomena of social life in terms of a moral instinct. In 1887 Höffding had made a careful descriptive analysis of the moral organization of the family, the state, and "*die freie Kultargesellschaft*," using as his principles of explanation "a feeling of pleasure or pain" (*Lust=oder Unlustgefühl*) which "when it has developed from its basis in sympathy into a consciousness of duty and justice, finally becomes the criterion of ethical judgments of pleasure and pain," and a conception of welfare (*Wohlfahrt*) as "the principle for the determination of the contents of ethics and for the evaluation of human conduct."

Höffding, however, wrote before the extension of the evolutionary principle to the field of morals had been con-

summated, and he therefore did not attempt to make his explanation include the development of modern out of primitive morality. This task was very boldly attacked a decade later in Sutherland's "Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct." Sutherland attempted to trace the origin of an instinct which, emerging from the parental instinct of the lower animals in the form of sympathy, had "deepened and expanded" into "the moral instinct with all its accompanying accessories, the sense of duty, the feeling of self-respect, the enthusiasm of both the tender and the manly ideal of ethic beauty." With Westermarck this moral emotion is broadened into a mere emotion of approval and disapproval, which, acting spontaneously though apparently along relatively fixed lines, determines the forms which moral and immoral practices assume in different civilizations.

While the work which has been accomplished by this type of "scientific ethics" has been of the very highest value for the sympathetic understanding of moralities foreign to our own, yet, as Green pointed out, it does not afford any basis whatever for the formulation of a positive contribution to the morality of our own day. Höffding saw this clearly enough. "There are two problems of scientific ethics to be distinguished from one another," he said. "Ethics is partly a historical, partly a philosophical science. Historical or comparative ethics seeks to set forth positive morality as it appeared at each given time among each given people. Philosophical ethics has as its problem not the description and explanation of given ethical phenomena, but evaluation itself."

Westermarck was more consistent and denied that this evaluation of current moral practices can be the business of a science. But this escape is purely verbal; it serves to make a clear distinction between the "natural science" of ethics and the practical problems of morality, but it does not explain away those problems.

Another effort to develop an expository ethics without even an attempt at a contribution to morality is that of

the rationalists. In spite of Taylor's cogent and vital demonstration that "it is an insufficient explanation of the nature and origin of moral ideals to say that they spring from the rational character of human agency," since "in order to know what kind of conduct will in the case of any individual or species conform to our principle (of economy, *i.e.*, "rationality") by securing the beneficial reaction—at the least cost, it is clearly all-important to know what are the general conditions of existence which have to be met by the action of the individual or species in question," the rationalist type of ethical speculation has persisted.

Why it persists, it is hard to say. The rationalists cannot claim to have made any such contribution to knowledge as that of the moral instinct evolutionists, nor do they devote themselves to the solution of practical moral problems. Moore admits that "in order to show that any action is a duty, it is necessary to know both what are the other conditions, which will, conjointly with it, determine its effects; to know exactly what will be the effects of these conditions; and to know all the events which will be in any way affected by our action throughout an infinite future," and that failing of this perfect achievement ethics may nevertheless marshal the alternatives likely to occur to anyone and study their probable effects. Yet he does not take any steps in the direction of this type of ethical study, contenting himself with dogmatizing about the varieties of experience which are "intrinsically" good and evil. And Rashdall seems to confess that "if a Moral Philosopher be a good guide in practical difficulties, it will be rather his qualities as a man (the fact that "he must at least have accustomed himself to consider the relation of means to ends," etc.), than his scientific training that will make his opinion valuable." This amounts to a withdrawal of ethics from the sciences and its establishment as a discipline contributory to the mental development of moralists. Thus the rationalists as well as the evolutionists resolve the methodological paradox by the complete sacrifice of the practical phase of ethical thinking.

V.

The only solution of the difficulties involved in the dualism of metaphysico-psychological speculation and practical morality alternate to the abandonment of the latter lay in the direction of the complete subordination of the speculative phase of ethics to the problems involved in the quest for moral guidance. If the axiom that from the analysis of moral judgment there naturally flows a stream of moral precepts had failed in practice, that failure could hardly be said to involve more than the particular types of moral analysis which had thus far found expression. It by no means followed that no explanation of the facts of moral life could be made which would give the slightest impulse to the solution of the practical moral problems of society.

It was quite natural, therefore, that there should develop out of this methodological crisis a new conception of the problems of ethics and the duties of the ethicist, which should involve the complete abandonment of the attempt to explain moral life as due to some one factor of the human personality, and should adopt instead the notion that the phenomenon of the moral regulation of life is a function of x variables,—in which all the faculties of the individual mind and all the relationships which constitute society have a part.

This conception of the problems of ethics was forecast in 1889 by Paulsen. Accepting the view that it is the function of ethics "to show how human life as such must be fashioned to realize its purpose or end," and that the end is not pleasure, but an "objective content of life, or, since life consists solely of action, definite concrete activities," Paulsen maintained that the difference between good and bad is the difference between "the effects which modes of conduct and acts of will naturally produce upon the life of the agent and his surroundings," and that morality consists not in the discovery of some great moral principle around which conduct can be organized, but rather in "the rational organization of life." In the same year Alexander

published "The Moral Order and Progress" in which he set forth a variant of the same theory, describing the moral order as an equilibrium of the moral impulses of an individual, and of the conduct of the individual in society.

These formulations, however, have the disadvantage of being transitional; they do not cut themselves clearly away from ethical tradition, and consequently they do not fully achieve the reconstruction of ethical methodology. That reconstruction has come with the development of a new and freshly vital mode of thinking. It has been announced most clearly by the Chicago pragmatists, whose statements will for that reason be adopted in this exposition.

In 1891 Dewey definitely set out to expose the undeclared assumption which underlay the ethical speculation of the past, the axiom "which is not indeed marshalled in open array upon the battle field, but about whose presence there can be no doubt,—the idea that moral theory is something other than, or something beyond, an analysis of conduct,—the idea that it is not simply and wholly 'the theory of practise.' Moral theory, for example, is often regarded as an attempt to find a philosophic basis or foundation for moral activity in something beyond that activity itself." There can be no doubt, Dewey went on to say, that there is no "intrinsic connection" between moral theory of this sort and moral conduct. "The Golden Rule gives me absolutely no knowledge, of itself, what I should do." Of what use, then, is this type of theory? Of great use, since it supplies the instruments of analysis. Philosophical theories play the part of instrument makers, supplying us with new instruments of thought whenever the old become worn out. But "it is a piece of scholasticism to suppose that a moral rule has its own self-defining and self-applying content. What truth-telling, what honesty, what patience, what self-respect are change with every change of intelligence, with every added insight into the relations of men and of things. It is only the breath of intelligence blowing through such rules that keeps them from the putrefaction which awaits all barren idealities."

Moral theory, as Dewey conceives it, is just this breath of intelligence. "What, then, is moral theory? It is all one with moral insight, and moral insight is the recognition of the relationships in hand. . . . It is the analytic perception of the conditions and relations in hand in a given act,—it is the action in the idea. It is the construction of the act in thought against its outward construction. It is, therefore, the doing—the act itself, in its emerging. So far are we from any divorce of moral theory and practise that theory is the ideal act, and conduct is the executed insight."

As early as 1891, then, the definition of the problems of speculative ethics was being based upon the demands of the practical moral situation. It still remained, however, to make more explicit the conceptions of ethical methodology which had been thus enunciated. A decade after the writing of the paper to which reference has just been made, Dewey recast the problems of ethics in terms of the historical method. After showing that "the historical method brings under intellectual and practical control facts which utterly resist general speculation or mere introspective observation," he went on to explain that the historical method demonstrates the continuity of moral experience, and provides the means for controlling that experience. "Its assumptions are that norms and ideals, as well as unreflective customs, arose out of certain situations, in response to the demands of those situations; and that once in existence they operated with a less or greater need of success (to be determined by the study of the concrete case). We are still enaged in forming norms, in setting up ends, in conceiving obligations." "To help us see the present situation comprehensively, analytically, to put in our hands a grasp of the factors that have counted, this way or that, in the moralizing of man, that is what the historical method does for us. Moral judgments are judgments of ways to act, of deeds to do, of habits to form, of ends to cultivate. Whatever modifies the judgment, the conviction, the interpretation, the criterion, modifies conduct.

To control our judgments of conduct, our estimates of habit, deed, and purpose, is in so far forth to direct conduct itself."

The historical method, however, does not define the field of ethical inquiry. That field cannot be accurately defined in terms of any method of ethics; or rather it cannot be bounded by any special method which hypostatizes itself into an "ethical principle" and proceeds to define ethics as the exercise of that principle. It is the very essence of this interpretation of the problems of ethics that this is not such a special principle of explanation, but is a theory that the facts of moral conduct can only be understood when all the aspects of every moral situation enter into the explanation as equally relevant. The field of ethics, then, is the whole moral situation. If we are to construct an ethics which shall cover that field,

we need to know what the social situation is in which we find ourselves required to act, so that we may know what it is right to do. We need to know what is the effect of some psychical disposition upon our way of looking at life and thereby upon our conduct. Through clearing up the social situation, through making objective to ourselves our own motives and their consequences, we build up generic propositions: statements of experience as a connection of conditions, that is, in the form of objects. Such statements are used and applied in dealing with further problems. Gradually their use becomes more and more habitual. The "theory" becomes a part of our psychical apparatus. The social situation takes on a certain form of organization. It is pre-classified as of a certain sort, as of a certain genus, and even species of this sort; the only question which remains is discrimination of the peculiar variety. Again, we get into the habit of taking into account certain sources of error in our own disposition as these affect our judgments of behavior, and thereby bring them sufficiently under control so that the need of conscious reference to their intellectual formulation diminishes. As physical science has brought about an organization of the physical world along with an organization of the practical habits of dealing with that world, so ethical science will effect an organization of the social world and a corresponding organization of the psychical habits through which the individual relates himself to it. With this clearing up of the field and organs of moral action, conscious recourse to theory will, as in physical cases, limit itself to problems of unusual perplexity and to constructions of a large degree of novelty.

This statement of Dewey's practically identifies the field of ethical speculation with that of the specific moral prob-

lem. According to this view ethics is not an abstract speculative science, engaged in establishing "laws" definitive of moral judgment. It is rather the scientific treatment of moral problems. Ethics attempts to carry out on a larger, scientific scale just those thought processes which precede a moral decision in the mind of a wise man,—a man who would understand what he is doing before he does it. It seeks to understand the significance of the forces of social convention and of individual character—impulse and habit which sway the judgment this way and that, and the larger meaning of the issues at stake in the social situation. And the goal of such a scientific study of all the discoverable phases of a moral problem is not the creation of psychological generalizations, but rather the wiser and more scientific solution of the specific moral problem by the clear exposition of its innermost meaning.

This exposition, as Dewey has demonstrated, is greatly facilitated by the employment of the historical method. One can hardly understand the full significance of the social conventions which play so large a part in every moral situation without some knowledge of the manner in which those conventions have come to be what they are. This particular historical task has been undertaken by the sociologists, who, nevertheless, have shown some tendency to content themselves with giving descriptions of the different codes which have obtained at different periods among different peoples without correlating them and exposing the continuity of their development, or if they have attempted to see the continuity of social forms they have done so at the sacrifice of a clear vision of the unity of development of all the various institutions which together constitute the social order. The former criticism is, perhaps, premature, as the research into specific civilizations must necessarily precede the attempt to construct the results of such studies into the genetic form, and the recognition of the continuity of their development. Hobhouse, for example, has done as much as anyone along the line of tracing "the evolution of the ethical consciousness

as displayed in the habits and customs, rules and principles, which have arisen in the course of human history for the regulation of human conduct." But though Hobhouse has organized a mass of material in such a way as to indicate that moral codes do grow from one another in a continuous progression, he has done little more than allege the unity of the developmental process, even in the third edition. Furthermore his characterization of that process is rather too external to suggest very clearly what the impelling forces behind the process are. On the other hand, Professor Tufts, although he has made no such extended research into the actual history of morality but has centered his attention upon the attempt to understand the nature of the evolutionary process in the field of morals, has made an extremely important suggestion for the interpretation of moral development.

Assuming the notion, of which he had been an early exponent, that mind is something which is developed in the course of societal evolution, he has gone further and described moral evolution as a process in which the moral faculty is sharpened by a growing social order, while at the same time the social structure is built up by the exercise of a developing moral consciousness. The most significant feature of Professor Tufts' statement of the nature of the development of morality is his full recognition that the gradual moralization of society through the evolution of social conventions is but one aspect of a process which includes as its other phase the development of the moral character of the individuals who compose society. Ethics deals with both of these aspects of life and conduct. "It has to study the inner process as determined by the outer conditions or as changing these outer conditions, and the outward behavior or institution as determined by the inner purpose, or as affecting the inner life."

When, therefore, Professor Tufts describes the evolution of morality as a rationalizing and socializing process he refers to the development both of social institutions and of individual character. Thus the "rationalizing process"

means the greater use of intelligence, caused by the exigencies of the satisfaction of primitive wants. At the same time this rationalization is reflected back upon the objective situation in the creation of new institutions and the attendant higher organization of group life. So with socialization: Associations formed originally as a result of fundamental instinctive needs have their effects upon the human animal, making him more dependent on a group and more fond of social life. These changes in the character of the individual find equivalent expression in the growing complexity of the social structure. The building up of a socially self-conscious individual and the building up of a complex social group are phases of the same process.

VI.

This conception of the function of ethical theory is more than a mere eclecticism. If it were no more than that—if it only substituted for the moral theories which lay particular stress upon various features of the moral life a sort of theoretical compromise in which all those features were included without any selective emphasis—then the charge might be justly made that it is as barren of practical consequences as any of the systems which it seeks to supplant. But such a charge could be brought only if it could be shown clearly that the ethical theory, relying upon the old assumption that principles for moral guidance spring naturally from the correct understanding of the moral judgment, rests its oars as soon as it has formulated its conception of moral life and evolution.

But it would be difficult to make such a demonstration; for such a cessation of effort would be in flat contradiction to this notion of the function and problems of ethical theory. The principal point of difference between this and the traditional metaphysical and psychological theories is found just at this point. The traditional ethical doctrines essayed the analysis of the moral judgment in the vague hope of discovering the "true" principle of moral conduct, assuming that a knowledge of that princi-

ple could somehow be applied to the solution of practical moral problems. This doctrine, on the contrary, maintains that the analysis of moral consciousness yields no such principle, by the mechanical application of which one can determine off hand what is right and good. It rests upon the conviction that any moral ideal which is deduced as an *a priori* formula from such metaphysical or psychological speculation is no ideal at all but only a conglomeration of words, until it has been given specific meaning in a long series of actual moral decisions each of which determines whether some particular act or policy is contained in that ideal or not. It asserts that if ethical speculation is to establish any really vital connection with the problems of living which are universally admitted to be after all the fundamental ethical problems it must take up into itself that specific and particular sort of moral speculation which precedes such actual moral decisions. For it is those decisions which determine what we think right, when all is said, and not our belief in greatest happiness principles or categorical imperatives.

Ethics can never hope to supplant the individual decision; its one claim to scientific standing must therefore depend upon its ability to contribute to moral progress by making individual moral problems its business. It must study the moral consciousness and moral evolution not as ends in themselves but only that as a result of such studies it may say with somewhat more wisdom than is the mead of the common man whether particular immediately contemplated acts and policies are right or not. Consequently it must take into consideration not only motives and impulses, the good will, the moral sense, and the balanced reason, but also the whole objective setting and significance of the facts themselves. Its business is not only with faculties, but with institutions; it deals not only with men, but with events. It must achieve its results not by some metaphysical legerdemain, but by the plain hard work of mastering the essential facts.

It is clear that such work involves the concentration

upon the solution of moral difficulties of the results of all the other sciences. Physics and chemistry and geology must contribute to an understanding of the alternatives presented in the moral situation and to a comprehension of the physical results of choices that have been made. The biological sciences contribute to a clear apprehension of the implications involved in the preference and accomplishment of "life as a biological process." And the social sciences should illuminate the social structure so that the ethicist may see the influence of the social order in the individual moral process, and the incidence of the effects of the individual moral choice upon other men through the medium of social readjustment.

Out of this concrete study of as many of the aspects of human life as can be brought under scientific observation the ethicist draws his conclusion with regard to a host of disputed moral problems. And from those conclusions he creates, if he can, a practical and personal ideal—not deduced by some transcendental logic from the psychology or the metaphysics of the moral judgment, but constructed out of the materials of the accumulated moral experience of the race.

C. E. AYRES.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.